1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's [587] elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gunse hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 835

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

W. Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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illicit intercourse with a young widow who had been born a Gume, and had a child by her dead husband. This was regarded as incest. The youth was put to the ordeal of plunging his hand into boiling cow-dung and water, and as he was very severely scalded the couple were adjudged guilty. The youth was ultimately received back into the community after a penal feast to the clan, and has since married legitimately; but the widow and her child were driven out of the *pargana*, and in 1934 were said to be living in a village some forty miles away near the Chanda border of Kutru. This was the only definite example of a breach of the rules of exogamy among Hill Marias that came to my notice. In Padalbhum and Tapalibhum *parganas*, however, there were said to have been one or two cases within memory in which both the man and the woman had been received back into the clan after recovery of heavy penalties from them and their parents and after they had sworn to separate and never repeat the offence. It was stated that a child born of such an incestuous union would never be admitted to social or religious ceremonies, or given a wife. Among the Bison-horn Marias connexions between men and women of the same clan appear never to occur, but cases are by no means unknown of affairs between men and women of the same phratry, and it was stated that these are regularized by a visit to the clan-god of the man, with the child, if any, of the union, and by the payment of a heavy fine. I had to try the son of a *waddai* clan-priest who had killed his father because the latter, after first seducing the wife of the accused's younger brother, had raped the accused's wife and driven both his sons out of the house. In this case the two women were not of the same phratry as their father-in-law, and he could have married them had they not been married to his sons. Tribal feeling against the dead man was extremely bitter, and, though it was recognized that the son was justified in slaying his father, this alone was not sufficient to purify the two sons from the guilt of their father's incest; a heavy fine was imposed on them, to collect which took them three years, though in the meantime the elder son was allowed to succeed his father as clan-priest and to officiate as such, and both were admitted to the *pandum* and other feasts. In two other murder cases there was a remarkable hostility displayed by witnesses towards husbands, in one case the accused and in the other the brother of the murdered man, whose wives were suspected of incestuous love affairs; but it was not possible to ascertain exactly what had happened. The general idea seems to be that such incest will bring upon the community the special wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, in the form of visitations of man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers, or famine or pestilence.

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614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-ravar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure
● 835] or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-ravar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

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582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue; with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *manāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

[835] So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*anga*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

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in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darimo*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtman, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

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'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.' [1]

VIII

Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight, considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

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both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell.

FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2½"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual

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way, though not always with the full ceremonial. Indeed a girl should be married to the boy she is engaged to—if he will have her—as soon as possible. At Kibi Belanga, for example, a Maravi boy, the Panda of the ghotul, used to have intercourse with a Maravi girl, and she became pregnant. The matter became known to the elders of the village who fined him and married the girl quickly to a Naitami boy of Kidir village to whom she was engaged. The child was born three months after marriage and was accepted by the husband. A few years ago in Hathipakna there was a scandal when the Malko, 'a daughter of Naitami', was made pregnant by the Jamadar, also a Naitami. They attempted an abortion, without success, but after the boy's father had paid twelve rupees, the Malko was married, by the reduced ceremonies, to a boy at Sodma.

The kindly, gentle Muria makes things as easy as possible for the young. 'Even an elephant with four legs sometimes stumbles.' 'What can you do to one who has missed the road?' But if the girl refuses to leave her lover, the matter becomes very serious, and both are outcasted. In Metawand, I was told that such people were never re-admitted into the tribe, and after death only the chelik would touch their bodies and take them to the pyre. If a *kutuhal* was erected it would have to be apart from the others.

A few years ago, at Alor, a member of the Kuhrami clan eloped with a Kuhrami girl. They were condemned by the panchayat, but took no notice. For 'the mouth that desires its fill and the genitalia that are excited never listen to advice'. They are now living together at Hirri. No Muria will eat with them, and at festivals of the clan-god they get no share of the consecrated meat. If a son is born, he will be called Bhula Huwa, but he will not be regarded as outcaste. He will have all the tribal privileges denied his parents. 'For he was tied up in the bundle; he knew nothing of what was done.'

This rigorist attitude is not so much one of moral condemnation as due to a fear of the supernatural vengeance that may descend upon the whole clan. In some cases, the guilty pair are forgiven if they perform an elaborate ceremony and pay sufficient fines. For two years they have to wait. Then if the Gaita approves he takes them to a tank or stream. Near the bank they make a ring of stakes and build a little bamboo wall, covering it with grass and thatch, inside which the boy and girl are made to stand together. The grass is set on fire and as it blazes up they jump through the flames into the water. After bathing, they put on new clothes and throw the old ones into the water. They make suitable offerings to the gods and are henceforth free of their guilt.

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The general atmosphere of kindly tolerance probably accounts for the fact that so few tragedies have occurred. In the police records of the last ten years there are only two cases of suicide which arose out of clan-incest. The first was in January 1932. Chime and Kule of the Timri ghotul were of the same clan and in love with one another. The girl's parents married her to a boy called Jhola, from Supbeda, who had a wife already. She left him and it is said that she returned to the Timri ghotul and began to sleep there again. If this is true, it is remarkable in view of the normally strict taboo on married girls entering the ghotul. But all such rules are broken sometimes. After a time she was found to be pregnant but only after several months did the matter come to the ears of the village elders. When they questioned Chime about it, she took the hand of Kule and named him as the father of the unborn child. This was too much for him and on the night of 18 January, though he went to the ghotul as usual, when all were asleep he went quietly out and hanged himself.

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Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¼"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mâma*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapai is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Leti, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bidarsau. Leti was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

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father-in-law?' The old man crept out of bed and stood behind the wall. When the girl asked the question, he replied in a loud, strange voice, 'Your father-in-law is going to die; there is only one way to save him; lie with him and his fever will be cured'. At this the girl was frightened and said to the Departed, 'But the marriage haldi is still on my body, how can I do such wickedness? The marriage booth is yet green, how can I betray my husband?' But the old man replied, 'If you want your father-in-law to live, do as we say; the sin will not be yours, but that of the Dead'. Then the poor daughter-in-law went back to the old man and told him what the Departed had said, and he asked her what she thought of it. She said she was willing to do what they ordered and she lay with him. When all was over, she asked whether his fever had left him, and he told her that it had, and praised her devotion to the Departed.

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